Chapter. 41

Kyoto ②

March Lion

March comes in like a lion
Chica Umino

AH...

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SUNSET.

WHEN I CAME TO MY SENSES, I WAS STANDING WITH A HOE IN MY HAND.

I REALIZED I WAS DREAMING RIGHT AWAY.

FOR SOME REASON, IT FELT SO FAMILIAR, SO I STOOD THERE AND WORKED THE FIELD.

I SEE, I MUST HAVE NEVER ENTERED THE 3RD LEAGUE AND RETURNED HOME...

I'M LIVING AS IF I NEVER LEFT.

I SEE.

THAT'S THE WOMAN I LOVED FIVE YEARS AGO.

SOMEONE'S CALLING ME.

OH

THE HOUSE IS AGLOW.

KAI'S REALLY GOOD

NO ONE IN TOWN HOLDS A CANDLE TO HIM ANYMORE

HE'S REALLY SOMETHING.

MA AND PA TOO

EVERYONE'S HERE, AND EVERYONE'S HAPPY

I MISS THEM SO MUCH

I'M GONNA CRY

I'M SORRY EVERYONE, YOU'VE ALL

BEEN CHEERING FOR ME FOR SO LONG...

DAD, GRANPA,

EVERYONE,

EVEN IF YOU COULDN'T GO PRO,

KAI

IT'S ALRIGHT

BUT

IF YOU CAN LIVE LIFE WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT, YOU'VE LIVED WELL.

EVERYONE SEARCHES FOR WHEREVER THEY ARE.

IT'S SOMETHING

SO LONG AS YOU'RE HAPPY.

KAI.

THAT'S ALL YOU NEED TO DO

drip
drip
drip
SSSshhhh
EVEN IN MY DREAM,
OW
click
beep
beep
beep
beep
beep
beep
beep
beep
beep
beep
beep
beep
IT WAS SHOGI THAT MADE ME HAPPY.

AND IT WAS THE REGRET OF
"I WANTED TO BE A PROFESSIONAL SHOGI PLAYER"

EVEN IF THEY WERE WRONG, IT'S ANNOYING
DOESN'T SEEM GROWN UP
IS THIS WHAT THEY CALL "TALKING BEHIND YOUR BACK?"
Ah, my stomach hurts
THEY WON'T EVEN GET TO THE MATCH IN HIS HOMETOWN.
AT THIS RATE HE'S GONNA SUFFER A STRAIGHT 4 MATCH LOSS.
THIS MUST BE A NIGHTMARE FOR SHIMADA. I MEAN HE'S AN 8-DAN.

THAT CAUSED PAIN IN MY STOMACH.

AND THE VERSION OF ME WHO PUT EVERYTHING ON THE LINE TO COME THIS FAR, TO STARE AT A FOUR GAME LOSS.

THE VERSION OF ME WHO DIDN'T TURN PRO, AND WENT BACK HOME TO THE FARM,

WHICH ONE IS IN A NIGHTMARE?

LET'S GET TO THE BITTER END, AND FIND OUT.

SHIMADA PUT UP A FAIR RESISTANCE

ON DAY ONE, ALTHOUGH HE FAILED TO BREAK SOYA'S SOLID DEFENSE.

SECOND DAY OF THE SHISHIOU TOURNAMENT

AND THEN

JUST AS SHIMADA WAS ABOUT TO ATTACK WITH HIS KNIGHT ON 7-3, THE TIME CAME FOR THE LUNCH BREAK.

Dining hall

Shuzan

OH MAN

FOR A 8-DAN, ISN'T USING THE 7-3 KNIGHT OVERDOING IT?

MORE THAN "ATTACKING" IT FEELS MORE LIKE

HE'S KINDA "RUSHING" IT.

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME MISO SOUP?

OH

YES PLEASE

IS HE TRYING TO MAKE SURE THE GAME DOESN'T DRAG OUT?

HIS HEALTH ISN'T GREAT,

BUT STILL...

SHIMADA'S PLAYING A GREAT GAME,

HE'S JUST GOT SOYA AS AN OPPONENT IS ALL.

CERTAINLY THIS GAME IS REMARKABLY FORWARD,

BUT HE'S NOT RUSHING, HE'S AS COMPOSED AS ALWAYS, THAT'S WHAT I SEE.

THE OPINION IN THE WAITING ROOM IS CONSISTANTLY ONE SIDED IN FAVOR OF SOYA.

YAMA-GATA'S TOO FAR AWAY ANYWAY.

SO SHIMADA WON'T GET TO PLAY THE MATCH IN HIS HOME TOWN, HUH?

BUT IT'S SHAPING UP TO LOOK LIKE A 4 GAME SHUTOUT VICTORY FOR SOYA.

BUT SHIMADA'S FACING DOWN GRAND MASTER SOYA, AND PLAYING A FINELY POINTED GAME.

THE BATTLE OF NERVES IS STILL GOING.

RING

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME SHIMADA'S IN BAD HEALTH?!

KIRIYAMA!!

RRRRRR...

HE'S NOT DOING BAD AT ALL.

BADA BADA BADA NIKA BADA BADA

BRO, YOU OK!?

I'M COMING FOR YOU!!

BADA BADA BADA

S-SORRY

I WAS GOING TO CONTACT YOU BUT...

Shimada told me no..

PLEASE DON'T, HE'LL MAKE SUCH A RACKET, I'LL BURN A HOLE IN MY STOMACH FOR SURE.

Don't tell him..

Stab Pang

Uh... Ummm

ONE TIME THAT GUY LANDED HIS HELICOPTER IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YARD.

BUT WHY?! DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE BEEN PRACTICING TOGETHER?!

YOU'VE BEEN NURSING HIM, AND EVEN WENT WITH HIM TO KYOTO?!

Nikaido

WHY DIDN'T YOU INCLUDE ME?!

I've been a member of this practice group longer than you! I'm your senior!

Wham Wham

I'M SURE NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM,

SHIMADA WILL PLAY THIS MATCH THROUGH UNTIL THE BITTER END.

I'D FLY TO THE MATCH IN A HEARTBEAT TOO.

KIRIYAMA, TAKE CARE OF HIM.

STAY WITH HIM UNTIL THE VERY END.

YEAH, I KNOW.

I'LL SEE HIM

ALL THE WAY TO HIS HOUSE

CHAIRMAN, PLEASE!

PLEASE LET ME DO THE MORNING RELAY AT LEAST!

OR ANNOUNCE THE SEALED MOVES, I CAN DO THAT AT LEAST!

I'm telling you I'm fine!

cough cough Let me be on TV! I went and bought a whole new outfit for this...

wheeze wack

drag drag

EVERYONE GARGLE!! WASH YOUR HANDS!

DOES ANYONE ELSE HERE HAVE THE FLU?

IF YOU INFECT THE PLAYERS, I'LL KILL YOU MYSELF!

EVERYONE WHO'S BEEN STANDING NEAR 9-DAN TSUJII,

WE'VE JUST FOUND OUT HE'S ILL WITH INFLUENZA!

ugh

R-

RIGHT NOW?!

ALRIGHT THEN SMITH! AS THE SECOND HIGHEST RANKED PLAYER HERE, YOU'LL BE FILLING HIS SHOES!

☆

It starts in 10 minutes!

For real?!

Ugh

KA-CHING

Let's go to the arena!!

CLAP

cough wheeze cough hack

YEAH.

THE TERM "UNFORT-UNATE PRETTY BOY" WAS MADE WITH HIM IN MIND.

hack cough

cough

OH MAN...

SINCE THIS MORNING, I'VE HAD A COUGH, I THOUGHT I MIGHT HAVE CAUGHT IT FROM IBA.

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'D INFECT US BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BE ON TV...

.....

HEY DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT! ALMOST NO ONE HERE HAS HAD A TITLE MATCH BEFORE.

what is that supposed to indicate? This seems ominous...

AND FURTHERMORE I HAVE TO BE AN OBSERVER TO SOMEONE ELSE'S TITLE MATCH BEFORE I GET ONE OF MY OWN?!

YOU WANT ME TO JUMP INTO THAT WITHOUT ANY PRACTICE?

MORE THAN THAT, YOU WANT ME TO EXPLAIN THE FIRST HALF'S SEALED MOVES?

Isn't it? Nah I should be happy...

This is like testifying at a friends divorce before getting married myself

sigh... Outlining someone elses highlights before I get any of my own...

shimmer

shine

WELL,

THERE'S ME, OF COURSE.

KA-CHI

the 16th Grand Master

CACE AGAIN ON THE SECOND DAY OF THE MATCH

THE FIRST SEALED MOVE WAS THE SILVER GENERAL ON 6-6

FLASH

FLASH

SNAP

SNAP

NOW THEN, I'LL GO OVER THE HIGHLIGHTS THUS FAR.

THE CURTAIN ROSE

THEN

?

HEY KIRIYAMA! come here This way

SO THEN THAT MEANS ...

Yay!

CLAP

CLAP

CLAP

CLAP

CLAP

CLAP

CLAP

CLAP

Yay!

NOW THEN, NOW WE WILL BEGIN THE EXPLAINATION OF THE 4TH ROUND OF THE **SHISHIOU TOURNAMENT** ON THE DEMONSTRATION BOARD.

NOW

TO PROVIDE A BREAK-DOWN, WE HAVE OUR SPECIAL GUEST

HOLDER OFTHE GIRYUU TITLE, FUJIMOTO RAIDOU!

OVER-WHELMING PRESENCE

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

NOW TO PROVIDE COUNTER-POINT, WE WERE SCHEDULED TO HAVE 8-DAN SAHARA HERE

UNFORTU-NATELY, 9-DAN TSUJII INFECTED HIM WITH INFLUENZA, AND HE CAN'T BE HERE.

IN CONSIDERATION TO PROVIDE YOU ALL WITH THE BEST COMMENTARY WE HAVE ARRANGED A SUBSTITUTE

5-DAN KIRIYAMA REI!

H-HELLO EVERYONE, I'LL DO MY BEST.

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

KEEPING THAT IN MIND

5-DAN KIRIYAMA IS, AS WE ALL KNOW, ONLY THE 5TH PERSON IN HISTORY TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL SHOGI PLAYER OUT OF MIDDLE SCHOOL.

ANOTHER PERSON WHO COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU SAY "MIDDLE SCHOOL PRO" IS OUR CURRENT GRAND MASTER SOYA.

HE WENT ON TO BECOME GRAND MASTER. SOME THINK YOU MAY REPRESENT THE "EGG WHICH WILL HATCH INTO OUR NEXT GRAND MASTER."

OH

UM

I...

I REALLY DON'T THINK I'M IN A POSITION TO COMPARE MYSELF TO MY SENIORS RIGHT NOW

I'll say.

So nervous he's using both hands

Future grand master?

have you lost your wits?

Why does everyone think debuting in middle school is so praiseworthy?

I can't understand.

Furthermore, what's wrong with you all?

.....

Whether he went pro in middle school or not,

he shot up to C-1, but hasn't moved since. There's no point in asking him.

I made my debut in my first year of high school, but by the time I was his age, I was ranked B-2.

If you're confused as to what I'm saying, I mean to say "I'm better than he is."

You've become more interested in the goal of someone becoming a professional player then the goal of earning the right to call themselves grand master! It sickens me.

but I know Japanese people hate the truth to be stated so bluntly so let me make my words more flowery for you.

A goal is fine, but what of one's deeds? That means the same thing, does it not?

harp harp

nag nag

I won't back down the slightest bit!!

But I'll knock him off his perch and become grand master myself!

Thanks to that bastard, I've been overlooked.

Furthermore, that is my goal!

Dumbfounded

Whaaaat?

Gleam...

Nodding

Yeah!

BEGINNERS

His friends

GLARE

Furthermore, once I become grand master, I will not hand over the title until the day I die!

That is all!!

I CAN'T DO IT! I'LL NEVER BE A-RANK!!

Waaah

Awww

I'M PETRIFIED...

PS:
SHIMADA YOU PLAY WITH GUYS LIKE THIS EVERY DAY, AND YOU GET BY WITH JUST SOME STOMACH PAIN? YOU'RE A MONSTER IN YOUR OWN RIGHT.

Chapter 41 END

March comes in like a lion

Chica Umino

SENZAKI MANABU'S LION SHOGI COLUMN 3

by Senzaki Manabu

The Study of Professional Shogi Yields Unexpected Results?!

The modern shogi player watches matches live, to not only study the game being played, but to also explain to reporters what is happening. In the waiting room of the fourth floor of the Tokyo Shogi association hall, it often gets very crowded with players on the day of a important match. On days of title matches that room is devoted to reporters, a handful of players are allowed to remain as witnesses and provide commentary, to applaud, and of course to study the game being played. Now then, is observing a game live even something worth doing? Compared to the other ways of observing a game, it takes quite a bit longer. but then again the time needed to consider each move is long too.

When watching players near your own level it's very difficult to contain comments like "Don't do that" or "that's a bad move" as you see them move their pieces. Of course we know the perfect game of shogi or for that matter shogi player... doesn't exist. Though the tension is there, the air in the group observing is much more jockular. And no matter how straight laced you are, everyone has their limits. Furthermore, needless to say, Shogi is a game which can evolve many ways. If you ask someone on a board whether move A, B, or C is the correct one, often they will be unable to tell you which move is best, even if the person you ask is the person who was playing. The opinion of the people in the waiting room during this time, is wrong most of the time. Other times the opinion is split, or all over the place. Actually the latter is what usually happens. But the reporters there need to report what the opinion of the room is, in that case they ask the highest ranked player there, and their opinion becomes the "opinion of the room."

In the early stages of the game since there are so many possible moves, that's when they'll ask amatures for "what they would do." It's a common practice. Shogi is a game with it's troublesome areas. We call that person the "grand amateur" and extol them with applause. It's only towards the end of the game that the veteran players begin to make their predictions, and by that time they usually wind up being accurate. However the truly important and spectacular moves have gone unnoticed by the players in the waiting room observing.